

THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

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The ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) Study

Conducted by the US Center for Disease Control & Kaiser Permanente

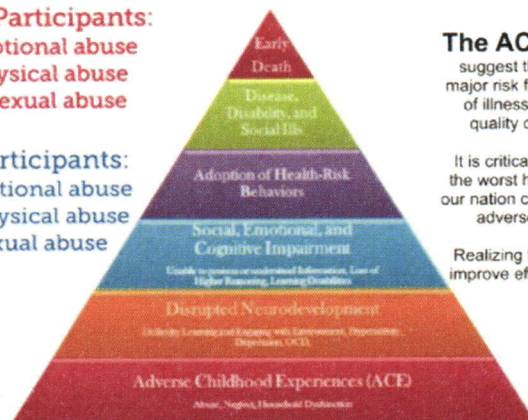
17,000 PARTICIPANTS SURVEYED

Female Participants:

13% emotional abuse
27% physical abuse
24.7% sexual abuse

Male Participants:

7.6% emotional abuse
29.9% physical abuse
16% sexual abuse



The ACE Study Findings

suggest that certain experiences are major risk factors for the leading causes of illness and death as well as poor quality of life in the United States.

It is critical to understand how some of the worst health and social problems in our nation can arise as a consequence of adverse childhood experiences.

Realizing these connections is likely to improve efforts towards prevention and recovery.



ACE Study



- Largest study of its kind ever done to examine health and social effects of adverse childhood experiences over the lifespan (18,000 participants)

Summary of findings



- ACEs are very common
- They are strong predictors of later health risks and disease
- This combination makes them the *leading* determinant of health and social well-being of our nation.



ACE DETERMINES THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE TEN MOST COMMON CAUSES OF DEATH IN THE US

What made up those ACE categories?



- ☐ Childhood abuse and neglect
- ☐ Growing up with domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental illness in the home
- ☐ Parental loss
- ☐ Crime

ACE score of 0:



Means the majority of adults will have few, if any, risk factors for the diseases that are the most common causes of death.

ACE score > 4 :



- Means the majority of adults will have multiple risk factors for these diseases or the diseases themselves



THE ACES STUDY SUGGESTS
THAT CHRONIC DISEASES IN
ADULTS ARE DETERMINED
DECADES EARLIER, BY THE
EXPERIENCES OF CHILDHOOD



What is Domestic Violence?

- ☐ Verbal
- ☐ Emotional
- ☐ Physical
- ☐ Sexual

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women



- One in four women will be physically assaulted by a partner
- One in three teens will be physically assaulted by a boyfriend
- Every 12 seconds a woman is battered in this country



Women are more likely to be injured from domestic violence than by car wrecks, muggings, and rapes combined.



LEAVING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP IS THE MOST DANGEROUS TIME

She has a 75% greater chance of getting killed after
she's left the relationship



Safe Horizon @SafeHorizon · Dec 8
"In half of cases, homicide was around the time victim took steps to leave."
#domesticviolence #WhyIStayed trust.org/item/201411251...

9 3

ABUSIVE PEOPLE ARE MASTER MANIPULATORS



They manipulate everyone.
The same confusion SHE feels,
Professionals, friends, and co-workers also feel...is HE
abusive, or does SHE have the problem?



The Associated Press and 3 others follow
Alice Anderson @AlicePoet · Feb 9
BECAUSE ABUSE DOESN'T COME WITH A NEON LIGHT. FLASHING "DIRTY,
UGLY, DIRTY, UGLY. #WhyIStayed #ItsOnUs

RETWEETS
2

FAVORITES
4



6:34 PM · 9 Feb 2015 Details

9 3

Reply to @AlicePoet

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HAS LONG BEEN PROVEN TO BE:



Pervasive
Deadly
Intergenerational
Horrible for women to live through
Impossible for children to survive and thrive in



Ryllee @RylleesWorld · Nov 22

*@nataliebailey36: @Winglessfly8 @bruisedwoman #whyistayed scared he was gonna kill me, #whyileft scared he was gonna kill me!!!

1

[View conversation](#)

Why Does She Stay?



Francesca @Ayoo_nana97 · Nov 8

#WhyIStayed because I thought I was strong enough to fix things and make them better if I just tried harder, did more, and did it perfectly

10 15



Mimi Anne Malarkey @medarlinv · Sep 23

#WhyIStayed he was broken, I thought I could fix him
#WhyILeft he broke me instead

20 26



WhyIStayed WhyILeft @Winglessfly8 · Dec 21

#domesticviolence #WhyIStayed because I wanted my kids to have a father.
#whyileft because I wanted my kids to have a mother.

10 13

Ananna Huffington and 4 others follow



HuffPost Divorce @HuffPostDivorce · Sep 22

"I believed I could love the abuse out of him." #WhyIStayed huff.to/1rhq1Jl

HuffPost Divorce

Why Does She Stay?

Leaving is a process:

1. Precontemplative
2. Contemplative
3. Preparation
4. Action
5. Maintenance

Why Does He Do That?

EARLY STAGE OF ABUSE



- The grooming process
- The true dynamics: control, narcissism, power over, entitlement (above the rules), intimidation works

LATER STAGES OF ABUSE



- Abuse escalates as the relationship progresses
- How the cycle of violence is established and progresses
- Mutuality vs. Power Over Victim

HER WORLDVIEW



50%

- ☐ Grew Up in Violent Home
- ☐ Doesn't Recognize the Abuse
- ☐ Abuse is the Norm
- ☐ Rigid World View
 - Not Safe
 - Not Competent
 - Can't Control Things-
(no one Can)

50%

- ☐ All Good
- ☐ All Safe
- ☐ I Can Fix It Without Help
- ☐ It's ALL my Fault
- ☐ Rigid World View
 - Competent
 - In Control

Why is this Important?



- ☐ And, how does this impact children and adolescents who have grown up experiencing it...



Parents who are Terrified and Terrifying

What is your role in keeping the family safe?



- The impact of violence on kids is profound.
- It is not enough to tell mom to leave.
- It is not enough to say mom is not protective.
- We **MUST** work together to get mom safe so that she can protect her children



Kids are resilient...

Are they really? Let's study the facts...

Some Statistics



- Children are 1500% more likely to be abused in homes where domestic violence occurs
- 70% of men who batter their wives, also batter their children
- The number one predictor of child abuse is woman abuse
- One in three teens will be physically abused in a dating relationship

Children who grow up in violent homes:



- Are 6 times more likely to commit suicide
- 24 times more likely to commit sexual assault crimes
- 74 times more likely to commit crimes against people
- 50 times more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol

Child brain development



- Some brain circuitry is built at birth: breathing, circulation – flip the switch, the light comes on.

Activity dependent circuits



- Other circuits are 'activity-dependent'. They need input to work, and the more input they get the better they work. It's not just flipping a switch—it's the cumulative impact of experiences

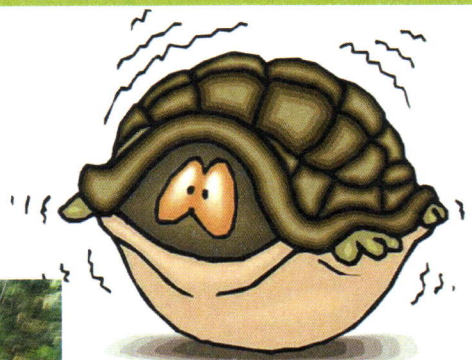


When a child is exposed to stress:



- Respond with increased hormones and activating different brain circuits to cope
- Essential response: help people protect themselves when threatened.
- When it is over, the physical response decreases and disappears

Fight, Flight or Freeze . . .



Toxic Stress Video



□ <http://youtu.be/rVwFkcOZHJw>

Three Levels of Stress Response

Positive

Brief increases in heart rate,
mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

Tolerable

Serious, temporary stress responses,
buffered by supportive relationships.

Toxic

Prolonged activation of stress response systems
in the absence of protective relationships.

Three Categories of Stress



- Positive stress--moderate, short-lived response to normal situations
 - Especially if occur against backdrop of safety, children learn to control and manage reactions to events with support
 - Develop a sense of mastery (first day of school, meeting new people, experiencing frustration)

Tolerable Stress



- Responses that affect brain architecture, but are:
 - Time-limited
 - Allow for brain to recover and reverse harmful effects
 - Supportive adult to help cope is critical to success
 - (Divorce, frightening accident)

Toxic Stress



- Traumatic or complex stress
- Strong, frequent, prolonged activation of body's stress management system
- Chronic, uncontrollable and/or experienced without access to support from caring adults



CHRONIC EXPOSURE TO
STRESS = NEVER TURN OFF
STRESS RESPONSE

Live in constant state of fight, flight, or freeze

Toxic Stress



- Adverse impact on brain architecture
- Can mean development of smaller brain: executive functioning is compromised
- Intervention is necessary to prevent/reduce negative impact
- Has implications on physiological, psychological, social development of child
- How Brains Are Built



Domestic violence homes are characterized by an environment of fear and hostility that has a much bigger impact on the lifestyle of trauma/stress than a single violent episode



TRAUMA VS. TRAUMA

Professionals in the violence/abuse fields have focused too narrowly on finding Trauma



Disorganized Attachment

- *The person I look to for safety is . . .*

scary

- *The person I look to for safety is . . .*

helpless




CREATES FEAR, POWERLESSNESS
AND RAGE



America's Children have PTSD


- For every one soldier returning home from Afghanistan with PTSD, there are 10 children living with PTSD caused by witnessing violence in the home.



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Future Victimization

- 2-7 times more likely to be victimized in the future*
- Polyvictims are more likely to be victimized again in the future.
- Polyvictims tend to experience more serious victimizations.
- 4-6 times the level of serious victimizations*



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Repeat victimization

- 50-66% of kids who are victimized once are also poly-victims
- Poly-victimization is more highly related to trauma symptoms than experiencing repeated victimization of a single type

Why?



- Represents a life condition of victimization rather than a set of events
 - Instead of the 'experience' of abuse, it becomes an 'identity'
- The threat to safety is everywhere



Is there hope for kids who are living with trauma?

Myth: Children are Resilient

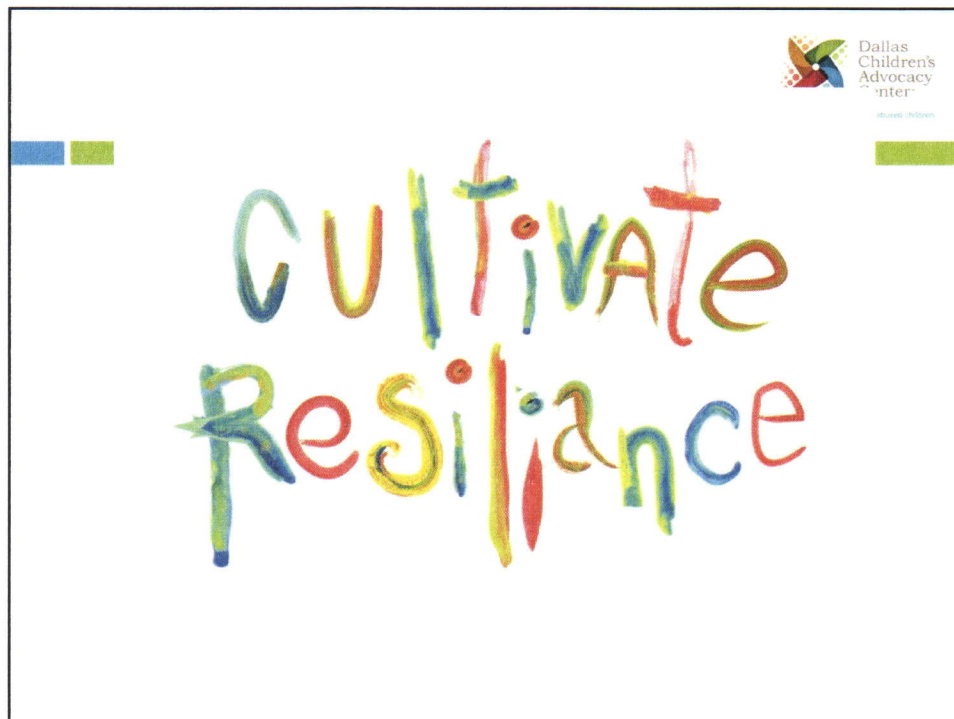


- Truth: They simply don't have the words to describe how their trusted adults are hurting them.
- Their hurt is manifested in their adult relationships and behaviors. (80% of men in Texas prisons grew up with family violence; 50% of girls, 40% of boys repeat cycle.)




WE MUST WORK TO PROMOTE THEIR RESILIENCY.

But we can't bank on it happening without expert services and a competent, safe primary caregiver committed to fostering attachment.



What Determines Resilience?



- ☐ Exposure to stress must be diminished
- ☐ Caregiver must step up to create:
 - ☐ Nurturing
 - ☐ Stable
 - ☐ Engaging relationships

Much of your work is already hitting the target



Where healing begins for abused children



1. Try to stop the abuse



Where healing begins for abused children



But How?



- Old way: threaten, intimidate – ultimatums
- The problem with doing it this way:
- Mom doesn't have the skills to do it after the system exits their life
- Mom isolates and hides from the system

Is there a better way?



- How can we develop skills for the family to ensure safety is a priority for the long haul
- How can we encourage reaching out for help instead of teaching the family the system is out to get them?
- How can we empower instead of create dependence?

Bonus Services vs. Actual Goals



- If your goals are helping her get WIC, Food Stamps, etc., you are missing an opportunity.
- Those items are your Bonus Services...things that help make life better, meet immediate needs.
- These items do NOT CHANGE her or the family.

Actual Goals



- Enhance safety
- Enhance self-sufficiency (because that enhances safety)
- Teach how and when to reach out for help (think about the two types of people: 1) there is no help, 2) I can't access help because I am sufficient alone)

Mandate Counseling



- If you are not equipped to help her recover, its okay to mandate her to get counseling/support
- She must learn the skill of staying out of violent relationships (end of last relationships = worse than the new relationship)

2. More Focus on the Safe Relationships





Safe Relationships

Number one predictor of resiliency lies in the relationship with the primary caregiver



Expectations

Set the outcome at the onset: what is your long-term vision of this child?



WE MUST CREATE A VISION OF SAFETY AND PROTECTIVENESS FOR MOM

Empower her to make a difference

Facilitate her taking the necessary steps



Identity of One

- Abusive homes have a single identity – the abuser's
- Until she begins to determine her identity, she will not be able to attract safe people in her life – and so she will refuse to leave him
- Point out to her her different identities and help her use those to make decisions (as a mom, what should you do here...what does the mom in you know is the right answer here)

Remember the two women



- One has never seen anyone protect a child
 - I am for hurting...you say you are going to help, but adults hurt me...so you will to
- The other is a problem solver
 - Have her help you solve the problem of adults needing to keep kids safe
- Encourage both women to make adult decisions...not put their child in the place to make the decision

Nurturing Parenting Skills



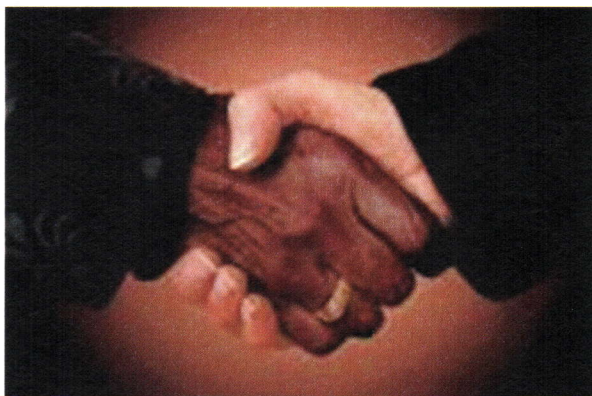
- www.nurturingparenting.com
- Online curriculum that teaches modules around
 - Disciplining with dignity
 - Empathy
 - Managing feelings
 - Communication
 - Nurturing as a philosophy
 - Nurturing routines

3. Respect



Where healing begins for abused children

Treating the family with deep respect grows their ability to respect their child



Capitulation – a Learned Skill



Where healing begins for abused children

- Learning not to capitulate – this has been an important survival skill
- Consider how she capitulates to you – and how that drives a wedge between her and people who will help her
- Making decisions for her is the **WORST** thing to do. We must encourage, motivate, and create space for her to be a problem solver

Consider your Micromessages



- How many of you have wondered if a mom was capable of protecting her child?
- How many have wondered if a child would be better off without their parent?

Parents as Partners



4. Self-Regulation



Imagine the Regulation Issues in a DV home

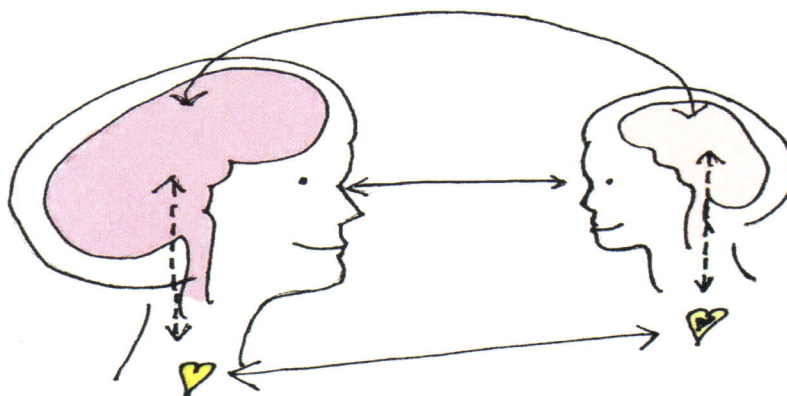


- ☐ Use power to get your way
- ☐ Use rage when that doesn't work
- ☐ Use victimization/capitulation to de-escalate things
- ☐ Use denial and minimization afterwards
- ☐ Keep the family secret very tight

Regulation



- Mutual regulation precedes self regulation

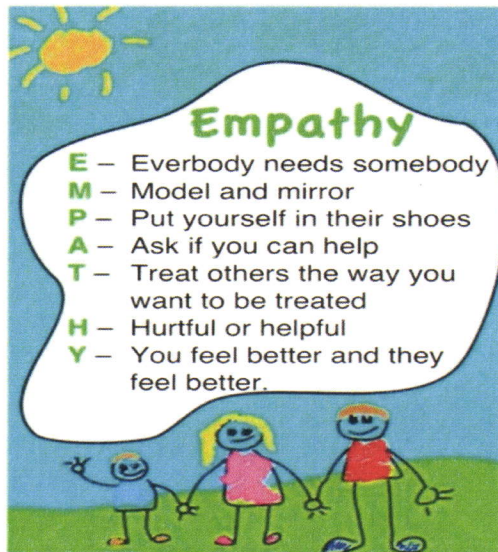


Parallel Process



- Where caregiver is treated to reduce their trauma, given the skills, and then coached in doing the same for their child
- Just Breathe

5. Cultivate and Intervene with Empathy



Domestic violence homes discourage empathy

Up to professionals to help facilitate this crucial skill



RSA SHORTS: THE POWER OF EMPATHY

BRENE BROWN



Role of Compassion, Kindness

- The more compassion, kindness and gentle expectations we can demonstrate/model to mom, the more she can treat her child with that compassion and kindness.
- Informing her, engaging her in the process, asking for and believing in her ability to create change is critical.

Self-esteem



- A mom in a DV home is often lacking in self-esteem
- Self-esteem is regained through mastery of small milestones and experiences
- You cannot wait until it is gained to make progress
- It is earned because of progress

Summary



- Living with abuse is hard
- Overcoming takes new skills
- But brain science shows us that adults and children can learn these new skills when they are in respectful relationships that encourage baby steps and look for successes.



Thank you!

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